

**MATERIÁLY**  
**XI MEZINÁRODNÍ VĚDECKO - PRAKTICKÁ**  
**KONFERENCE**

**«EFEKTIVNÍ NÁSTROJE**  
**MODERNÍCH VĚD - 2015»**

27 dubna - 05 května 2015 roku

**Díl 2**  
**Ekonomické vědy**

Praha  
Publishing House «Education and Science» s.r.o  
2015

PhD (Economics), Ass. Prof. Konstantiuk N.I.  
 Ternopil Ivan Pul'uj National Technical University, Ukraine

## THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON SOCIETY

The level of development of modern society is characterized by the favourable conditions for the development of a person in all spheres of social life. Nowadays most countries try to create ideal conditions for the development of a personality, having realized the importance of human capital in providing effective changes in the national economy. It should be stressed that UN uses three main criteria for estimation of the level of development of every country: life expectancy at birth, people living standard and gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education.

Education is a common precondition of economic and political development, the only proper path towards democracy and social justice.

On average across 24 OECD countries, adults with a tertiary education are half as likely to be obese compared to those with only a below upper secondary education.

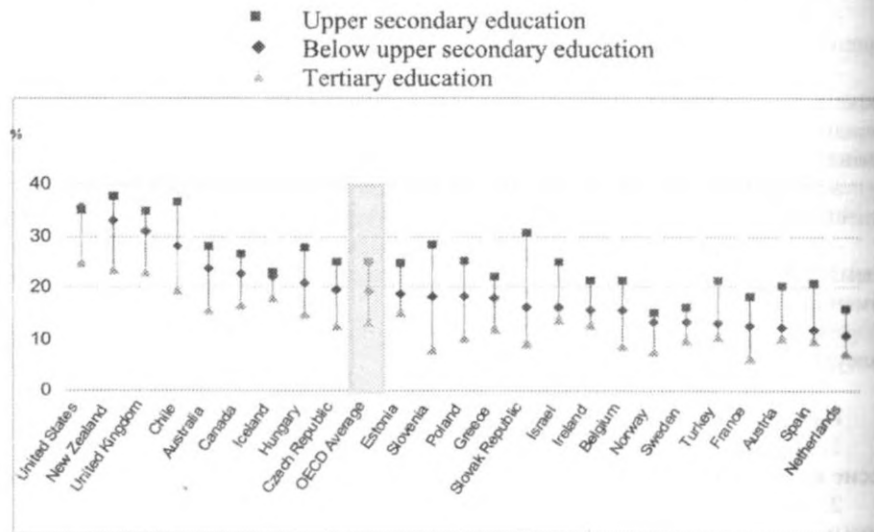


Fig. 1. Proportion of obese adults, by level of educational attainment (2011)\*

\* Data from the OECD (2013), Education at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators

On average across the 24 OECD countries with available data, approximately 19% of adults are obese. The incidence of obesity is particularly high among those with below upper secondary education (25%) and relatively low among those with tertiary education (13%). The incremental difference in health outcomes associated with more education (in this case, 12 percentage points) is commonly called the education gradient.

More-educated adults are less likely to be obese and smoke daily. The reduction in obesity rates by educational attainment is much greater among women and in countries that have a high average level of obesity. The reduction in smoking rates by educational attainment is much greater among men than women. The reduction is also greater in Central European and predominantly English-speaking countries than in other OECD countries.

The relationship between educational attainment and health indicators (obesity and daily smoking) remains strong even after taking into account differences in individuals' gender, age and income.

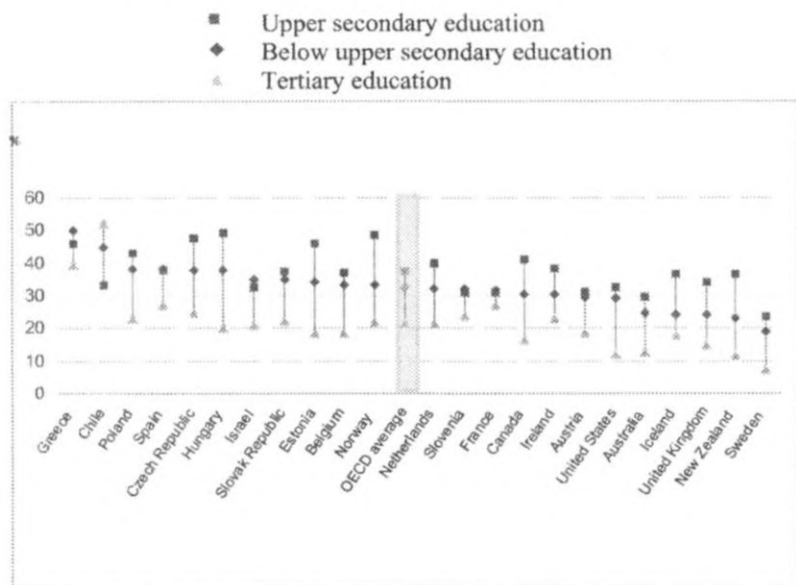


Fig. 2. Proportion of adults who smoke, by level of educational attainment (2011)\*

\* Data from the OECD (2013), Education at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators

Across the 23 OECD countries covered in this indicator, 30% of adults smoke daily. The incidence of daily smoking is particularly high among those with below upper secondary education (37%) and low among those with tertiary education (21%).

Certain Central European countries, namely the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary and Poland, the predominantly English-speaking countries; i.e. Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as Norway, show particularly high education gradients. In all these countries, adults with at least a tertiary education are half as likely to be currently smoking compared to those with only a below upper secondary education.

The relationship between educational attainment and health indicators (obesity and daily smoking) remains strong even after taking into account differences in individuals' gender, age and income.

Education may have a direct impact on health behaviors and outcomes in that through education, individuals can learn to choose healthier lifestyles and avoid behaviors that are detrimental to health. Education may also indirectly affect health since those with higher levels of education are more likely to earn more and be able to afford better health care and lifestyles.

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